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Service Secretaries Back Joint Chiefs on

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All three service secretaries, for the first time, have come out publicly for building a "thin" missile defense around the United States if talks with Russia fail.

This moves the civilian heads of the Army, Navy and Air Force toward the military Joint Chiefs of Staff on the anti-ballistic-missile (ABM) issue and away from their civilian boss, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara.

McNamara contends the United States should match Russia's missile defense with better offensive ICBMs. He believes the United States should not automatically build a missile defense if Russian cannot be talked out of full employment of such a system.

These and other politically regnant views of Pentagon

leaders are contained in House Defense Appropriations subcommittee hearings released yesterday.

To get on record the differing views within the Pentagon on the ABM question, the subcommittee questioned McNamara and Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, together at length.

Asked whether Russia keeps deploying an ABM despite discussions designed to achieve a freeze on missile defenses, McNamara said: "The question of whether we should or should not deploy an ABM is not really directly related to their ABM deployment."

"Our response to their ABM," McNamara said, "is not a U.S. ABM but an increase in the U.S. offensive forces. We have that underway. We will continue that as long as their defensive deploy-

ment, or changes in their offensive forces, make it desirable."

President Johnson's fiscal 1968 budget contains \$377 million which could be spent to start putting a missile defense around the United States, rather than just continuing the research on it, if the ABM talks with the Russians fail.

McNamara believes a missile defense would not buy either the United States or Russia any more military security, even if as much as \$40 billion were spent on it by this country. But he stopped short of telling the subcommittee he favored sitting out the ABM race even if Russia went ahead full speed.

The Joint Chiefs unanimously have recommended a missile defense around ICBM sites and 50 cities. They estimate this would cost about \$20 billion. McNamara argues that uncovered cities would demand missile protection, pushing the total ABM cost up to \$40 billion.

While agreeing that the U.S. should first try to negotiate an ABM freeze with Russia, Army Secretary Stanley R. Resor told the subcommittee that if those efforts failed, the U.S. should build a defense for missile sites and a few cities. The Army estimates the cost at \$4 billion.

Such a defense, Resor said, would have three objectives:

1. "To deny damage from the early Chinese Communist ICBM threat and to limit fatalities from increased Chinese Communist ICBM threats."
2. "To provide increased protection for Minuteman (ICBM) squadrons against Soviet attacks."
3. "To safeguard the United States against accidental launches of missiles by other countries."

The Army Secretary agreed with McNamara that such an antimissile system "would not provide a strategically meaningful defense" against an all-out Soviet attack. Resor added: "It need not, therefore, provoke any drastic modification or responses in Soviet offensive programs."

This last point rebuts McNamara's argument that a U.S. ABM system would prompt Russia to upgrade its offense, leaving this country worse off than before.

Navy Secretary Paul H. Nitze told the subcommittee, "We might be well advised to initiate a light deployment of

an anti-ballistic-missile defense subject to the results of proposed negotiations with the Soviet Union . . . We ought to know what a first generation system can do."

Air Force Secretary Harold Brown, formerly McNamara's research boss, said: "If these talks (with Russia) do not succeed, it might be well worthwhile to put up a \$5 billion system to defend the population against a small attack by the Chinese and to do such things as defend our missiles so that they could be survivable."

"It is a lot easier to defend missiles than to defend people," Brown said. "In my opinion, that, plus a thin population defense is the maximum which is really worth doing."